

Panoramas Made Crazy Easy

Source: The Photoshop Elements 6 Book for Digital Photographers,

By Scott Kelby and Matt Kloskowski

Making a panorama with Elements 6 is a snap! You can pretty much hand hold your camera without regard to the auto settings, and Photomerge will not only perfectly align the photos, but it will also seamlessly blend the pieces together, even if the exposure or white balance isn't perfect.

Step One:

There are two ways to build your pano: (1) You can start by selecting the individual pieces of your pano in the Organizer (Mac: Bridge). Then go under the File menu, under New, and choose Photomerge Panorama (on a Mac, it's under Tools, under Photoshop Elements). The second method (2) is simply to open the photos in the Elements 6 Editor, then go under the File menu, under new, and choose Photomerge Panorama. There's no advantage to choosing one way or the other, so choose whichever you like best.

Step Two:

Either way brings up the Photomerge dialog. Now you'll need to click on the button for Add Open Files, and then your photos to be merged into a pano will appear in the center column. You have five different choices for how your pano will be constructed in the Layout section on the left, and I recommend using Auto, which does a brilliant job.

Step Three:

The three choices below Auto (Perspective, Cylindrical, and Reposition Only) all give you funky looking panos, but suffice it to say, they don't give you that nice long pano most of us are shooting for. The Auto method brings back the "old" way of stitching panos. Just click OK, and within a minute or two (depending on how large your photos are and how many you're using), your pano is seamlessly stitched together. You'll see status bars that let you know that Elements 6 is auto-aligning and auto-blending your layers to make this mini-miracle happen.

Step Four:

Usually, to make your pano fit perfectly together, Photomerge has to move and rearrange things in a way that will cause you to have to crop the photo down to get the final result you want. So, get the Crop (shortcut C) tool and drag out your cropping border, encompassing as much of the pano as possible without leaving any transparent areas.

Step Five:

When you press Enter (Mac: Return), your pano is cropped down to size. Scott Kelby encourages you to try shooting panos "as is" (without changing all your camera settings, or turning off the auto exposure, or auto focus--just hand-hold, point, and shoot as many frames as you'd like). There now just one rule to remember: try to overlap each photo by around 20% to make things easier for Photomerge.